

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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September 6, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR

MR. BUNDY

SUBJECT: Speech by John Crimmins before American Legion

1. Attached, for clearance, is a draft of the speech which John Crimmins will give on Sunday in Miami. If you are short on time, you may want to skip the situation report on Cuba (primarily for foreign consumption) and start on the bottom of page 8. The paper has been, or is being looked at by INR, CIA, Alexis Johnson, and Ernest Lindley. The first eight pages, of particular interest to USIA, has been cleared by that agency.

2. I have given a couple nit-picks to John but, generally speaking, I think the speech is a pretty good, solid piece of work. With the exception of the last two pages, which touch on the future of Cuba, there is little in pages 8-18 which has not been said by someone in one forum or another. It might be noted that on page 16 John slaps Congress (along Presidential lines) for cutting funds from the Alliance for Progress while on pages 10-12 he tries to put the Cuban problem in perspective.

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Gordon Chase

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CUBAN FORUM

AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
SEPTEMBER 8, MIAMI

Prepared Remarks  
by  
Coordinator of Cuban Affairs

I. Introduction

(To depend on nature of the preceding remarks by other members of the panel: Senator Keating, Mr. Emilio Rodriguez (Cuban exile), and Senator Luis Somoza).

I should like this morning to discuss the question of Cuba under four broad heads: first, the present situation of the Castro regime; second, the nature and extent of the threat which Communist Cuba presents to the United States and Latin America; third, the policies and programs which your government is pursuing to meet and overcome that threat; and last, the basic principles which guide the Government's approach to a free Cuba.

II. The Present Situation of the Castro Regime

In turning to a consideration of the present situation of the Castro regime, I believe that, in the interest of gaining perspective, it would be useful to go back in history to examine the reasons which enabled Castro to gain the support of a substantial majority of Cubans representing nearly all sectors

of the society and economy. In my period of dealing with the Cuban problem, I have been struck by the number and variety of serious, responsible and thoroughly democratic Cubans in all walks of life who acknowledge freely that they supported the Castro efforts to overthrow the Batista dictatorship with their services and their pocketbooks. I believe that Castro's successful erosion of the Batista Government can be explained in part by the failure of that government to attend to long-standing economic and social problems, and by the widespread popular revulsion against the excesses, cynicism, and corruption of the Government. But this is not the whole answer. In part also, Castro's success can be explained by the broad popular support given the program of reform which he and his spokesmen promised the people.

Castro once described his program as "a revolution with bread and liberty". In complicity with his Soviet bosses, Castro has in fact deprived the Cuban people of all their liberty and a good part of their bread. The basic human freedoms no longer exist. The Cuban people have progressively, systematically and deceitfully been brought under the control of Communism on the Soviet model, a control maintained by a huge and efficient apparatus of repression. And Castro, who

once aspired to greatness, has shown himself to be an obedient accomplice in the imposition of Communist institutions and techniques which permit totalitarian domination of the Cuban people, the people to whom he once promised progress in freedom.

There can be no true or enduring progress without liberty. From time to time, however, the claim is made by the naive, the ill-intentioned, or the desperate that material gains can offset the loss of basic freedoms. In the case of Communist Cuba, as in the case of other Communist countries, not even this rationalization can be made.

Communism has lowered rather than raised the Cuban standard of living. In 1962 the gross national product was estimated to be 25 percent below 1958 levels, and in per capita terms the real GNP decreased at least 30 percent in Castro's first four years. Moreover, output will probably fall still further during 1963. The rationing of the essentials of life has been continuously extended. Average caloric intake of Cuban citizens is estimated at 15 to 25 percent less than in pre-Castro years.

With respect to internal factors, the steady deterioration of the Cuban economy has been brought about by the Castro-Soviet collectivization of the economy, the all but complete elimination of private economic activity, the general

Incompetence of the regime, and the reluctance of the workers to produce, either through lack of incentive, apathy or the execution of quiet but widespread sabotage which has taken the form of slow-downs or deliberate carelessness in the operation and maintenance of equipment. Externally, the effective application of our policy of isolating Cuba has had significant impact.

Nowhere has the Castro failure been more evident than in the production of sugar. This year's crop was not more than 3.3 million tons, as compared with the production of 4.8 million tons last year and the average annual production of about 5 million tons in the five years prior to the establishment of the Castro government. Now great emphasis is being placed on the necessity for all-out production of sugar. A major if not the basic factor in this decision to concentrate on sugar production, and to abandon the bold promises to diversify and industrialize, was the policy announced following Castro's May visit to Moscow that henceforth Cuba's economy will be governed by the "international division of labor." This phrase is a thinly-veiled manner of saying that Castro's Soviet bosses have decided that Cuba's role in the Communist bloc will be that of a producer of raw materials. This naked and brutal example of Communist colonialism and the exploitive nature of the relationship between the USSR and

Cuba is akin to eighteenth century mercantilism under which the mother country, in this case the Soviet Union, kept its colony, here Cuba, as a source of raw materials and a captive market for manufactures. Castro, mind you, acquiesced in this definition of the Soviet-Cuban economic tie.

So much for his promises of a diversified economy. So much for his promises to reduce Cuba's economic dependence on one country. The fact is that as the economy has deteriorated, Cuba's dependence on the Soviet Union has surpassed by far the extent of its former close economic ties with the United States.

The Moscow decision on the correct economic role for Cuba appears to have been part of broader plans. From a variety of indications it seems reasonably clear that the Soviets, concerned about pouring their money down a rat-hole, told Castro that he would have to arrest the decline of his economy, in order to attempt to consolidate his regime.

This decision has been reflected in an intensification of the efforts already underway to force the Cuban worker to increase production. The attempt to stop the fall-off in labor productivity, a major and possibly fatal failing of the Cuban Communist economic system, has taken a variety of forms. The establishment of work norms on the Soviet model, the so-called "emulation" campaign, and controls on wages have had the

effect of reducing the real income of the workers and of subjecting them to ever-increasing discipline. It now appears that a tough and far-reaching crack-down on labor on the Soviet pattern is in train. The willingness of the workers to accept such a crack-down is an interesting subject for speculation. In any case, the evidence of Castro's betrayal of his promises to protect and extend the rights of labor is unmistakable.

One of the principal promises of Castro was to carry out a land reform which would give ownership of parcels of land to those working them. Here also the performance has been a cruel deception. Not more than 35,000 farmers have been given titles to land, and those titles revert to the state with the death of the holder; they cannot be assigned to heirs. The system of state farms controls 40 percent of all farm land; the workers on them are state employees who receive a wage. The remaining private owners of land, mostly small holders who control about 55 percent of the total agricultural acreage, have no real initiative. They must conform strictly to state direction and must sell their produce to the state at fixed prices.

I have already referred to the apparent Soviet instructions to Castro to consolidate his regime by arresting the deterioration of the economy. Another element in this consolidation which is of interest to the Soviets is the need to build up

the single Communist party in Cuba. Since Castro's return there has been a stepping up in the organizing activities of the United Revolutionary Socialist Party. The formation of this monolithic party on regular Soviet lines offers opportunities to the old-line Communists at the expense of those July 26 nationalistic elements who served Fidel in the early days and have stood by him up to now.

I have tried to indicate the areas in which Castro has utterly betrayed his promises. I have cited, first and foremost, his destruction of personal and institutional freedoms, the reversal of the great bulk of the economic and social program he held out to the Cuban people, and his subordination of Cuban interests to those of the Soviet Union. It might be said that in some minor respects he has kept some of his promises, but even this has been at overwhelming cost in terms of human liberties. For example, he has made advances in expanding educational opportunities but the educational system has become merely a vehicle for Communist indoctrination. He has reduced rural employment at the price of expanded state control over the employee. He has given special favored status to groups within the Cuban society -- the military, the bureaucracy, youth in general and scholarship students in particular -- who



have advanced at the cost of the loss of their freedom and at the expense of their fellow Cubans. It is perhaps especially saddening to see the identification of students with the Castro regime because some of the most shining chapters of Cuba's history of struggle against oppressive rulers have been written by students. I believe that the natural idealism of youth and the instinctive desire for change and for untrammelled expression will lead them to recognize the high cost at which their preferment has been bought.

By the same token, I am confident that there are elements in Cuba, perhaps within the regime itself, who have been disillusioned and dismayed by the subordination of the Cuban identity to Soviet power requirements, by the increasing emphasis on a single Communist party which has been so eagerly sought by the old Communists, and by the failure of the Communist economic system to produce. Those elements whose dedication is above all to Cuba itself and to the welfare of the Cuban people may be led to examine the realities and to see that the aims of Communism do not serve Cuba.

### III. The Threat

I should like now to turn to an examination of the nature and extent of the threat which Communist Cuba poses to the United States and the Western Hemisphere. Of course, the first question

which arises concerns the extent of the military threat. Over the past months there has been a substantial reduction in the number of Soviet military personnel in Cuba, and we estimate that the primary emphasis of the remainder is on training Cubans in the operation of modern weapons and not on the maintenance of organized military units. <sup>However, fact, however, that</sup> Russian military personnel are still present in Cuba, <sup>is a matter of serious concern to us</sup> however, and their removal continues to be a major objective of our policy. However, these personnel are not a force that can be used externally. The Cuban military establishment, although very large and well-equipped by Latin American standards, does not possess the means for external operations. In any event, we maintain overwhelming military power in the area.

A military threat would arise, of course, if offensive weapons systems were to be reintroduced into Cuba. We have made repeatedly clear that we would not permit the reintroduction of such systems. This is basic. Such reintroduction would create a situation much more serious than the October missile crisis.

Again with respect to the Soviet military personnel, we have emphasized that we would not tolerate their use in Cuba in a Hungary-like situation.

We have also made clear that we will prevent, by military means if necessary, aggressive acts by Cuba.

The continuous surveillance which we maintain in relation to the island of Cuba and neighboring waters is designed to guard against the various contingencies which I have mentioned. We will not permit interference with that surveillance.

Although Cuba is not a military threat, it does constitute a threat in another sense to the Hemisphere. I refer to Castro-Communist support of subversion directed against Latin American governments. The existence of a Communist government in Cuba provides a base in which agents can be trained for dispatch to Latin America and from which propaganda and funds can flow. Poor -- and in some cases desperate -- economic and social conditions in Latin America create the atmosphere in which Cuban-based and supported subversion can operate. This is a matter of grave concern to us and to other governments of the Western Hemisphere. As I will point out below, we have taken and will continue to take a series of measures to reduce this threat.

#### IV. U.S. Policies and Programs

In turning now to a brief outline of the policies and programs of action which your government is pursuing to meet the Cuban problem, I should like to emphasize at the outset that it is necessary to look at Cuba in perspective. The Cuban issue,

although critically important in itself, is part of the world-wide confrontation between freedom and Communism. This confrontation, which runs around the globe, exists on different planes and in different intensities at any given time. The struggle between the Free World and the Communist world is highly complex and delicately balanced.

The sectors of that struggle are interdependent. For example, U. S. measures against Cuba can have repercussions in Berlin, in Iran, in Southeast Asia; and all of these situations can in turn influence the course of developments in Cuba. This principle, of course, operates on both sides of the line. For example, the Soviet-Chinese Communist ideological conflict was an important bearing on the Soviet's handling of their relations with Castro. To put it simply, in deciding on policies and courses of action toward Cuba, anyone who claims to speak responsibly on the Cuban problem must keep in mind the whole panorama, and must determine whether any specific measure against Cuba advances the national interest in the overall context. This, I assure you, requires the most careful judgment by all of us as Americans.

The objective of our Cuban policy is a truly free Cuba which poses no threat to its neighbors. We want to get rid of Castro and Communist influence in Cuba. We do not intend to

coexist with a Communist satellite in this Hemisphere.

In moving toward that objective, we are engaged in a variety of measures, unilateral, bilateral and multilateral, which are designed to increase the isolation of Castro; to intensify his serious economic difficulties; to prevent, by military means if necessary, aggressive acts by Cuba; to thwart Cuban-based and supported subversion of Latin American governments; to increase the costs to the Soviets of their maintenance of Castro; to persuade the Soviets that they are backing a losing and expensive horse; to effect the withdrawal of Soviet military forces in Cuba; and to maintain surveillance of Cuba to ensure that it does not again become a military threat to the United States or its allies in this Hemisphere.

INCERT A

As I have said earlier, the economic chaos which exists in Cuba today attests to the effectiveness of our isolation policy. Free-World exports to Cuba in 1959, Castro's first year in power, totaled approximately \$680 million dollars; in 1962, they were \$85 million dollars -- a decline of 88 percent. Free World purchases from Cuba -- primarily sugar -- have declined almost as much. In consequence, the costs to the Soviets of keeping Cuba barely afloat economically continue to rise.

With respect to Free World shipping in the Cuba trade, the cooperation of our friends and allies as a result of their awareness of the threat to the common interest represented by communism in Cuba, the drastic reduction in free-world commerce with Cuba I have cited, the action we have taken to forbid cargoes by vessels engaged in the Cuba trade, and the effects of the pertinent provisions of the For Ign Aid Appropriation Act of 1963 have together produced a two-thirds decrease in the number of calls at Cuban ports by free-world ships during the first seven months of 1963 compared to the same period of 1962. There was an increase in the number of free world vessels calling at Cuban ports through May of this year. June and July saw a levelling off, and preliminary data for August indicate

indicate a significant decrease in calls by Free World ships. We are not content, however, with the present situation. We are continuing to enlist the cooperation of our allies and to examine carefully the possible effectiveness of additional measures. We expect that during the balance of this year further progress will be made toward the goal of eliminating all calls by Free World vessels at Cuban ports.

The isolation of Cuba by air since the missile crisis has tightened greatly. At the present time, the only scheduled Free-World air service to Cuba is provided by the once-weekly flight by the Spanish airline, Iberia. The Cuban state airline operates two or three times a week to Mexico. All other scheduled service between Cuba and the Free World has ceased.

The steps taken to isolate Cuba from the Free World have a bearing, of course, on the continuing and expanding campaign we and our Latin American allies have undertaken to reduce the threat of Castro-Communist subversion in Latin America. This major problem is being attacked on several fronts: multilaterally, through the Organization of American States and particularly through the cooperative endeavors of the Governments of Central America, bilaterally between the United States and individual Latin American Governments, and unilaterally by the United States by such actions as the recent regulations

issued by the Treasury controlling Cuban dollar assets, some of which might be used to finance subversion.

All of these steps have among their objectives, the restriction of travel to and from Cuba and the flow of material, propaganda and funds from that country, the exchange of information on the activities of subversives, the improved supervision of communist organizations and missions, and the improvement of the internal security capabilities of the police and armed forces.

We have made distinct progress in the fight against Cuban-based and supported subversion, but we and the Latin American governments have a great deal more to do. We face a determined and resourceful enemy, and to thwart his efforts requires imagination, skill, tenacity, and tough-mindedness.

The policies and program, which I have been discussing thus far have been essentially short-term in the sense that they are directed toward the immediate problem of Communist Cuba. Our actions go well beyond Cuba itself. Through the Alliance for Progress, we are endeavoring, in cooperation with the Latin American governments, to eradicate the social, economic and political conditions in which Communism flourished before Castro and in which, unless corrected, it will continue to flourish



flourish long after Castro is gone. In a very real and solid sense, the Alliance is a massive effort to meet Castro's subversion with programs for economic growth and social justice. It is a powerful long-range weapon in our battle to thwart Communist ambitions in Latin America. This being the case, I confess that I find very disturbing the recent action of the House of Representatives in cutting the Alliance by \$150 million which sum, mind you, represents less than 3/100 of one percent of our gross National Product. I have been struck -- and puzzled -- by the fact that many of the most vociferous critics of the Government's policy toward Cuba are among the first to knock out of its hands one of its principal weapons. Frankly, the logic of this attitude escapes me.

17

To sum up briefly, we are executing essentially a two-front policy with respect to Cuba; on the one hand, we are moving to weaken Castro with a view to his eventual collapse; on the other, we are strengthening the Latin American countries which he and his Soviet masters are intent upon capturing. I can say that in the net our policy is progressing. We face a long, hard road, and I would mislead you if I were to say that the end is in sight. But we are advancing.

### Approach to a Free Cuba

In concluding my remarks, I want to set out for you the basic principles which guide us in contemplating the free Cuba which is the objective of our present policy. We start, of course, from the fundamental premise that the Cuban people themselves will decide how they will achieve and organize their freedom, and that those now within Cuba must have the major share of this responsibility.

We adhere to these tenets which are the foundation stones of the Alliance for Progress; that every people has the right to exercise the basic human freedoms; to govern itself free of foreign domination; to choose freely its own leaders; to change freely the economic and political institutions of society to serve the welfare of all in the interest of social

Justice and economic progress; to have decent housing, to have the opportunity to educate their children properly; and to own the land they work.

These principles represent the fundamental yearnings of all mankind. These goals were those which the Cuban people sought before Castro came to power and which he so cynically denied them. The Cuban people, in all their present suffering, still aspire to those goals. Our hope and purpose is to see that they have an opportunity to realize them.